



LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN (LEAP)

***“A Hub of Excellence in Local Governance
and Gender Mainstreaming”***



2025-2030

ACRONYMS

LEAP - Local Environmental Action Plan

URDC- Umgusa Rural District Council

ZRP-Zimbabwe Republic Police

EMA- Environmental Management Agency

DVPs- Development Partners

GVT- Central Government

FC- Forestry Commission

CAMPFIRE – Communal Areas Management Programme For Indigenous Resources

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Umgusa rural district council works in an ecological framework that seeks input from all stakeholders operating in the district. This is because Umgusa Rural district council understands that environmental issues are crosscutting issues and hence need to be treated as such through all stakeholder involvement. Against this background, Council would like to appreciate the input from all stakeholder groups that participated in coming up with this document. Umgusa rural district Council prides itself in being a centre of excellence in Local governance and gender mainstreaming and this is shown by magnitude of interventions that will be shown herein.

FOREWORD

The LEAP seeks out to harmonise environmental planning at district and community levels as provided in the Environmental Management Act in terms of sections 87 and 95, which stipulates that the Local Authority for a specified area must have the plan and as such must feed into the National goals, objectives and vision with regards to the conservation of natural resources and environmental management.

The LEAP document is produced in order to offer the Local Authority opportunities for adoption of proactive approaches towards major hazards associated with natural resources and anthropogenic activities. It is an attempt to minimize the negative impacts of human activities on the natural resources by ensuring that everyone has a role to play in the management of resources.

The plan identifies major problem areas and key stakeholders in the management of each resource. It also assigns roles and responsibilities to each key stakeholder, ensuring that the community is involved either by representation or participation at all levels of environmental management. It recognizes the importance of local traditional leadership and attachment of rural community livelihoods and customs to the natural resources and the environment. It is in this regard that environmental subcommittees and fire management committees are village based and headed by Village heads. Above all the document is designed to enable the achievement of the best results with the least resources, mainly by harnessing the indigenous knowledge systems in conservation as well as the use of locally available resources in land reclamation. The LEAP is expected to cover a period of three years and may be subject to modification in response to changes in resource availability and the physical environment.

SECTION 1:

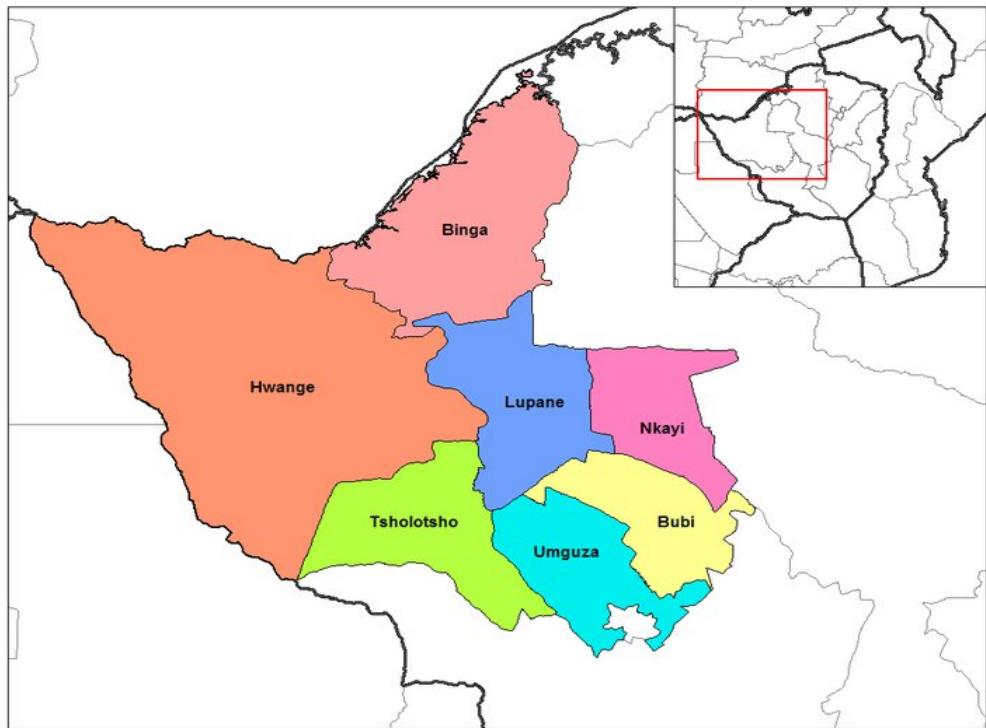
1.1 Administrative information.

Umgusa Rural District Council is an establishment based on an of Act of Parliament, which is the Rural District Council Act (Chapter 29:13). The same act also has a regulatory effect on the day-to-day business of Council giving council the function to operate as a Local Authority, hence the establishment of the Umgusa Rural District Council entity in 1993 after the amalgamation of Nyamandlovu Rural Council and Bulawayo-Esigodini Rural Council.

Rural District Council's operations are regulated by the government through the Rural District Council Act Chapter (29:13), as noted above, and the Ministry of Local Government. It is government policy that RDCs should have a stable financial base to reduce their reliance on Government. Council operations are regulated by the government and so government policies have an effect on Council operations, these include council budgets, allocation of funds, rates payment, preparation of books of accounts, quotas for hunting, sand abstraction and firewood movement etc.

Section (74) of the RDCs Act requires RDC's to promote development in the areas under their jurisdiction. However, the state does not have a budget for local authorities. Rural District Councils therefore have a huge task of capacitating themselves to achieve basic service delivery which is the main function of most Councils to ensure provision of sufficient water, transport, sewerage, decent housing and meeting the residents' social and economic needs.

Umgusa Rural District council is located in Matabeleland North and thus situated in agricultural region (4) four. This region is exposed to dry weather with unpredictable rainfall patterns thereby increasing the risk of drought. The district surrounds the city of Bulawayo and its larger area is found on the Western side of Bulawayo with an estimated population of 90000 people. In the long run the district's size might be reduced due to the expansion of the City of Bulawayo. The neighbouring Rural Districts are Umzingwane, Insiza, Matopo, Tsholotsho, Lupane and UMGUZA. The total area of Umgusa is about 837 478 hectares of which part of the land is administered by the central government and boasts of one conservancy which is privately owned. The forestry areas which are about 92 512 hectares are protected and administered by the Forestry Commission and the are namely Chesa and Umgusa forest and part of Inseze as seen on the map attached (fig 1.1).



Umgusa District and its surrounding districts

The Council also has under its jurisdiction peri – urban areas such as Kensington, Douglaston, Rangemore and Montgomery which are dominated by small plots whilst the small stretch up to the 40km peg on Nyamandlovu- Tsholotsho road boasts of A2 farms, and the rest of the area is characterised by communal and resettlement areas. There is not much mining in the district and three quarters of the industry is agricultural with the greater proportion practising commercial farming. However most of the large scale farms were turned into small scale resettlement areas or into semi communal resettlement areas as per the Land Reform Programme. Other industries in Umgusa include cement manufacturing by Portland Holdings (PPC) and brick moulding by MacDonald's Bricks. The district provides pit sand and river sand to these industries, respectively.

1.2 Population information

According to the 2022 census count, Umgusa District had a population of 113 265 people on 6043 square kilometres. Population density was 18.74 per square kilometre with an annual population increase of 2.4% using previous population estimates. The population structure denotes that Umgusa has 52.2% more females than males at 47.8% with an actual figure of 54149 males. With regards to age distribution our population is very young and active as we have 58% of our population sitting within the 15-64 years age group. Of the 113 265 people in Umgusa, 87539 are resident within the rural area of the district which is where we have most of our environmental problems.

1.3 Vegetation Characteristics

The district lies in agro-ecological Region IV and v which is characterized by low erratic rainfall and high temperatures. To the North ugua is characterised by teak woodland right across inseze forest and Igusi areas. The vegetation is dominates by *Giboutioa coleosperma*, *Terminalia sericea*, *Pterocarpus angolensis* and *Baikiaea plurijuga*. The district is made up of bushy savannah vegetation, which is dominated by Mopane, Blood wood, Mubondo, Acacia species and Magwe (yellow wood) tree species. The vegetation is also, composed of portions of sweet grass in the Central part of the district and sour grass in the South-eastern part. The land is suitable for tourism, cattle ranching and wildlife activities such as campfire programs.

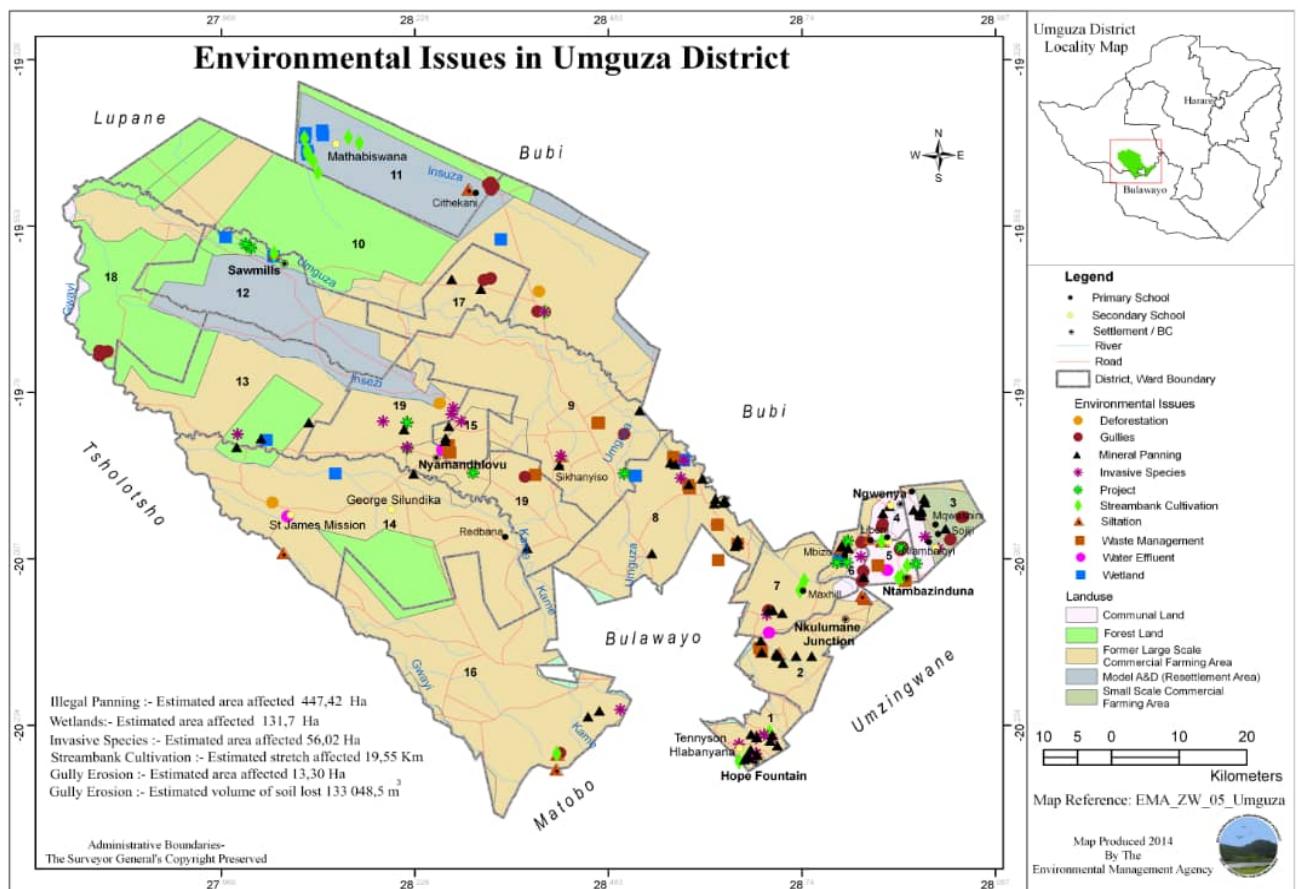
1.4 Land Degradation

Land degradation is mainly due to illegal mining, poor agricultural practices e.g. farming along the slope and overstocking. The main forms of land degradation are summarized in table 2 by ward.

Land Degradation by Ward

Source: District Environmental Management

MAP Showing environmental problems in Umgusa District.



1.5 Education Information

There are fifty-six (56) primary schools and seventeen (13) secondary schools . The majority of secondary schools in Umgusa are private ie St James, George Silundika, John Tallach, Tennyson Hlabangana . in the past two years we have had an increase in teenage pregnancies due to influx of Makorokoza and illegal miners especially the Ntabazinduna areas leading to high school dropouts on the part of the girl child. In as much as the education policy allows a pregnant girl to go back to school. Perception and fear of being chided have led to the expecting young girls to forego their education.

SECTION TWO:

2.1 Natural Resource Tracking and Assessment

This section outlines the environmental issues that are most prevalent in the district. Wider consultations conducted throughout the district are all in agreement that the environmental issues listed in Table 4 are the most prevalent. The scale of severity of these issues in the 23 wards in the district varies. In this section, each issue shall be analyzed outlining its causes, perpetrators, impacts and possible solutions as proffered by different stakeholders in the district.

Table 4: Major Environmental issues eminent in the district

Environmental issue	Prevalence		
	High	Medium	Low
Veldt fires			
Improper waste management			
Pollution			
Improper use of hazardous substances			
Overgrazing			
Illegal mining			
Sand poaching			
Deforestation			
Soil erosion			
Invasive species			
Gullies			

a) Veld fires

Veld fires are more prone in resettlement areas which are former large-scale commercial farming areas, mainly due to the presence of tall grass. Notably, the fireguards are no longer being maintained and with increased human presence in these areas veld fires are now more prone than before.

The Map Below shows an analysis of persistent veld fires recorded by EMA in the district for the year 2023. Ward 10, 13, 14 and 9 have a history of having the largest burnt areas in the years and have drawn the interest of stakeholders. Deliberate efforts are to be outlined to ensure that, veld fires are extensively controlled in these areas.

MAP: UMGUZA FIRES AND LANDUSE 2023.

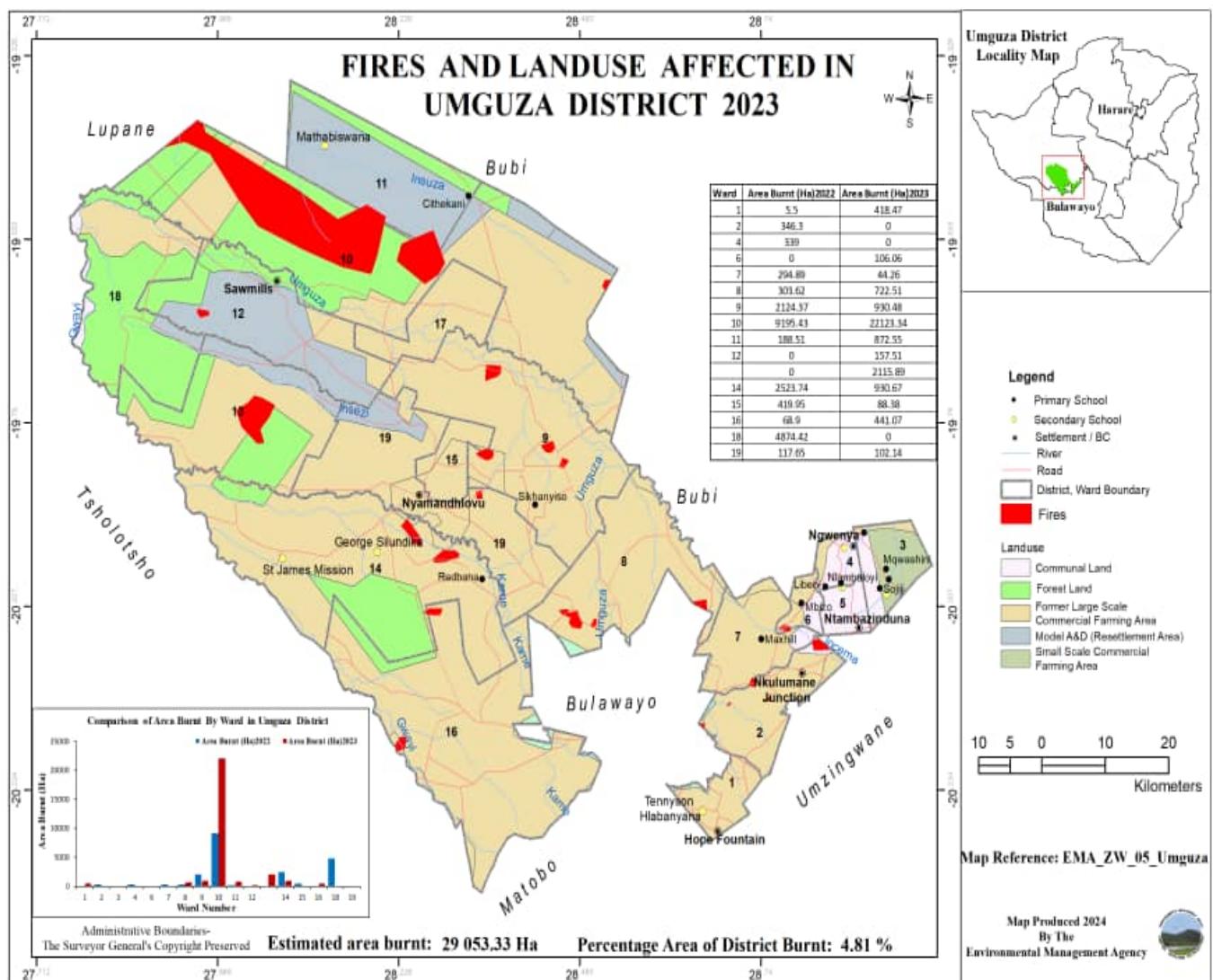


Table 5: Veld fire assessment in past three years in the district

Area burnt (Ha)	Area burnt in %	Year	Leading Ward
17821.10	2.95%	2021	10
20802.28	3.44%	2022	10
29053.33	4.81%	2023	10

Table 6: Veld fires

Cause	Perpetrator	Impact / Effect	Solution
-Bee harvesting	-Farmers	-Loss of flora and fauna	-Awareness on fire management
-Illegal mining	-Miners	-Land degradation through soil erosion	-Stiff penalties
-Wildlife Poaching	-Poachers		-Enacting by - laws on veldt fires and Enforcement
-Field clearing	-Smokers	-Loss of pastures and farming	
-Unattended fires at e.g Bus-stops.	-Passengers	-Pollution	- Establishment and training of fire Teams
-Cigarette Smokers			Provision of equipment for fire fighting Teams
			-Assist communities to create fire related infrastructure e.g fireguards

b) Improper Waste Management

Umgusa RDC surrounds the City of Bulawayo. Given such it has both rural and peri-urban centres in its Jurisdiction. Need for waste management I is impeccable. Solid waste management should accommodate the two different types of land use in both land use. It is also prudent that Umgusa Rural District Council acknowledges that waste management is one of the most visible urban services whose sustainability and effectiveness are good indicators of sound municipal management and good local governance. In year 2023 , the trust for Umgusa Rural District Council Solid is prioritisation of waste management prioritised to protect the peri urban residents and community from possible disease outbreaks and epidemics as well as to preserve the aesthetic beauty of an area. Key areas looked at under the Peri urban areas is King City, Hopeville, Hopelyn , Douglasdale, Mbundane, lower and upper Rangemore.

Table 7: Waste Management

Cause	Perpetrator	Impacts/effects	Solution
- <i>Non-recyclable Containers</i>	- <i>Business people</i> - <i>Customers</i>	- <i>Diseases</i> - <i>Death</i> - <i>Pollution</i> - <i>Affects the ambiance of the Environment</i>	- <i>Community awareness training</i> - <i>Traditional leaders to implement environmental Management</i> - <i>Policy amendment</i> - <i>Proper settlement</i> - <i>Proper dumpsite</i> - <i>Vehicles for refuse collection to be available</i>
- <i>Lack of education</i>			
- <i>Unavailability of waste collection material</i>			
- <i>Lack of legislation</i>			

c) Water Pollution

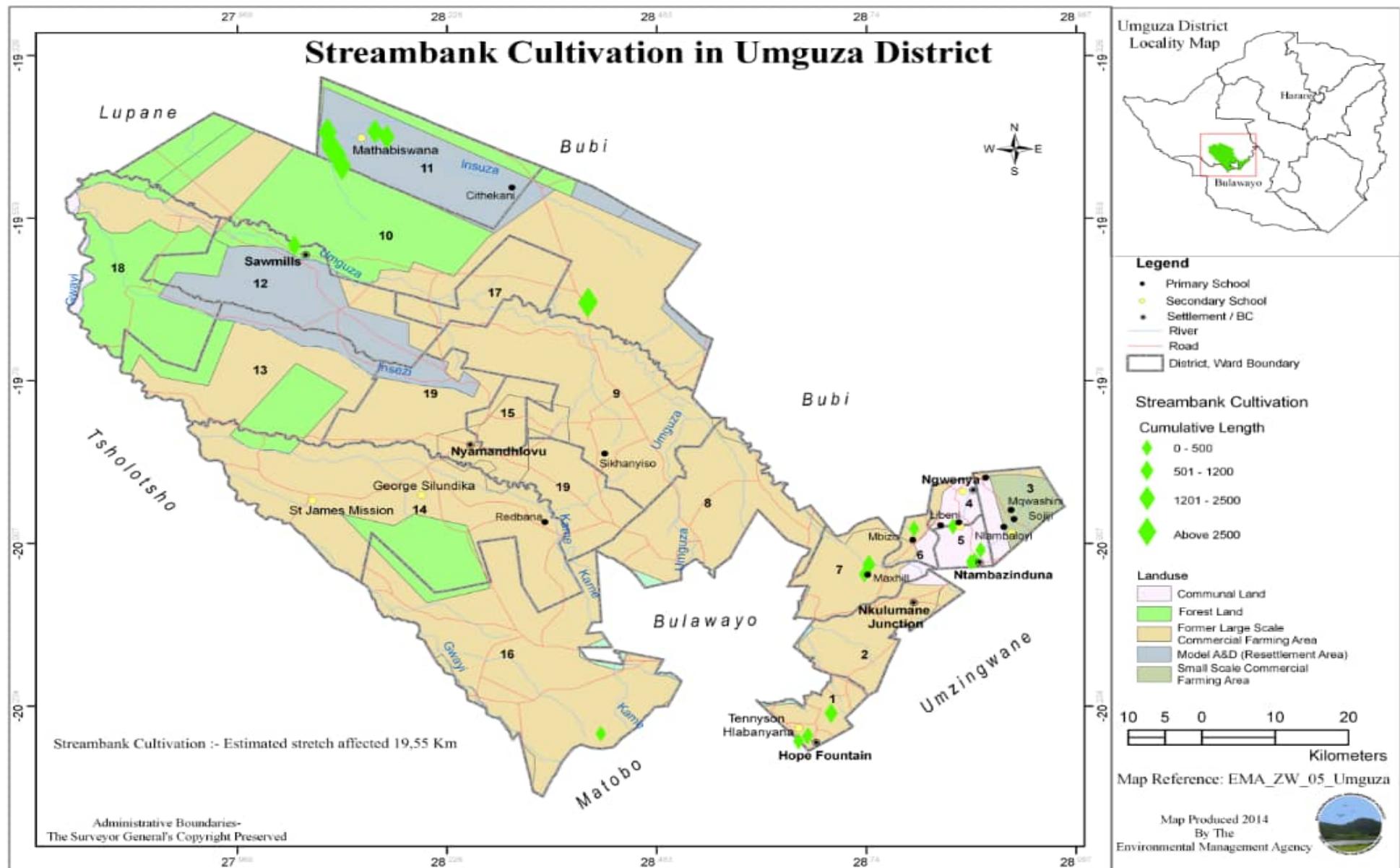
All the water bodies are affected, faecal contamination causes beef-measles or poultry-measles in animals. Water pollution leads to disease outbreak and deaths in humans. Chemical from Agriculture and mini. Basically all livelihood activities contribute to water pollution but of particular and detrimental effects are mining, agriculture and poor solid waste management.

Table 8: Water Pollution

Cause	Perpetrator	Impacts/ effect	Solution
<i>-Mining</i>	<i>-Miners</i>	<i>-Contamination of water Bodies</i>	<i>-Timely refuse collection</i>
<i>-Poor waste management</i>	<i>-Customers</i>		<i>-Frequent testing of water</i>
<i>-Un-road-worthy vehicle Emissions</i>	<i>-Drivers</i>	<i>-Outbreak of diseases</i>	<i>-By law regulating emissions discharge</i>

d) **Stream bank cultivation**

In peri urban areas within the district, stream bank cultivation is more pronounced in ward 7 Maximhill area, ward 1 hope fountain area, ward 5 at Libeni, Nhlambabaloyi, Ntabazinduna and ward 6 . Prevalence of streambank cultivation is common in other areas of the district although not in high numbers ie Redbank areas affecting Khami river and in Magwadini affecting Umguzza river. The impacts are severe as they include siltation of dams, rivers and destruction of aquatic ecosystem. Stream bank cultivation has far more disastrous effect like, flooding and drought. According to the EMA assessment. cumulative length of stream bank cultivation is more pronounce in ward 10 and ward 18 which are close to GWAYI river.



Map : Showing Distribution of streambank cultivation in Umgusa District.

Table 9: Stream bank cultivation

Cause	Perpetrator	Impact/effect	Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of knowledge -Clay brick moulding -Need for fertile soils -Need for establishment of nutritional gardens 	-community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Siltation of dams and or Rivers -Leads to drought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Awareness meetings -implementation of By Laws: penalties -legislative laws on Resettlement -Drilling of boreholes closer to communities. -land allocation for Irrigation projects

Invasive Species

Lantana camara is the most problematic invasive alien species in Umgusa District closely followed by *Dichapetalum cymosum* commonly known as umkhawuzane. The latter is very poisonous on livestock and has led to various livestock deaths. Umgusa District. Community members exacerbate the spread of *Lantana camara* unknowingly when they burn their fields in preparation for next planting season. This is because *Lantana camara* breaks seed dormancy through heat. Moreso unknowingly farmers use *Lantana camara* as a fence. However, the impacts of *Lantana camara* are severe as the invasive species overtakes and invades land surfaces leading to change in vegetation type and cover resulting in shortage of grazing and farming land. The problem with *Lantana camara* is that it regrows even after measures of clearing have be taken thus the operation should be done time and again. The most effective measure is uproot the plants. Most affected wards in Umgusa include ward 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 10 ,15 and 19. Umkhawuzane is very dominant in Seafield, Magwadini and Drysdale area of ward 13.

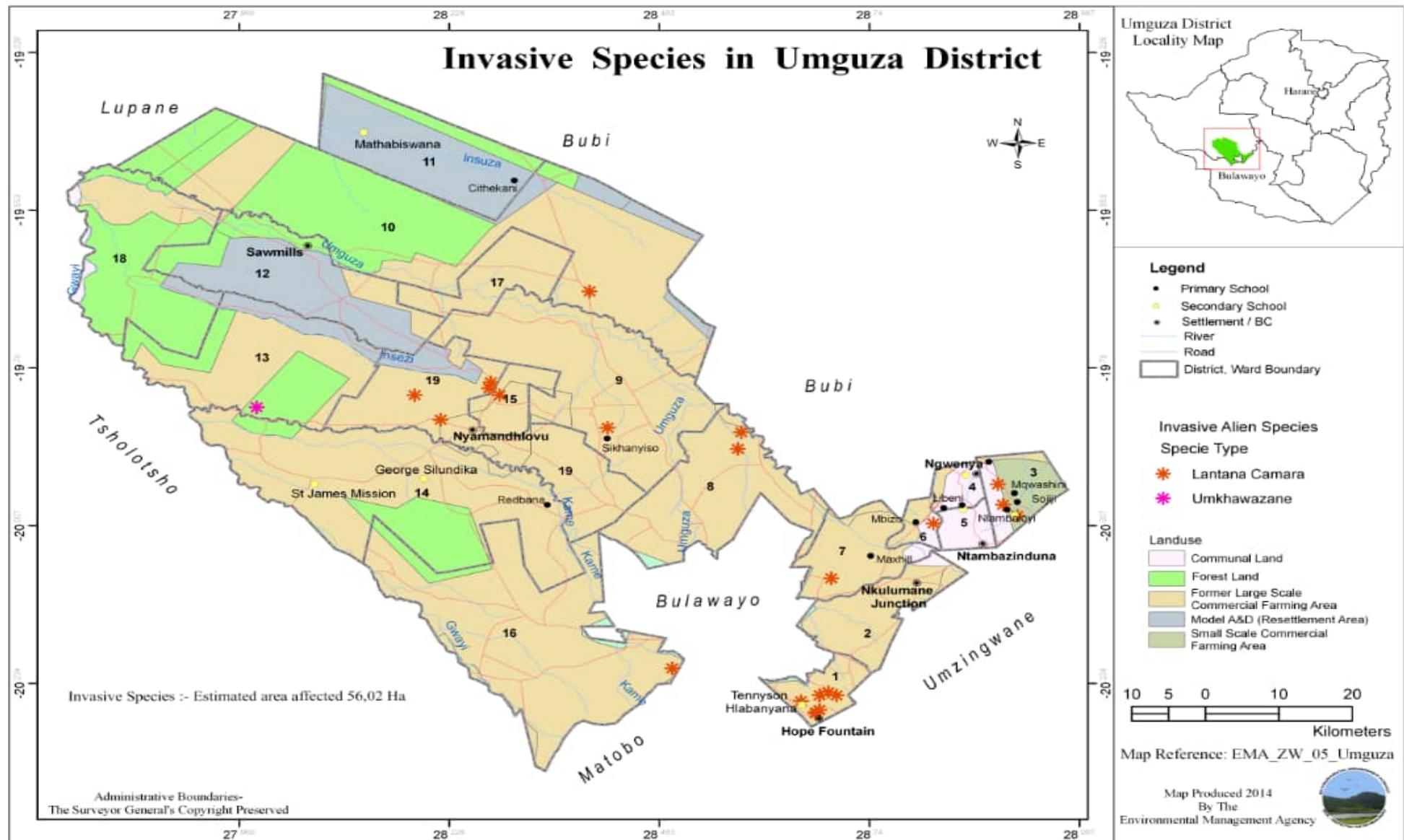


Table 10: Invasive Species

Cause	Perpetrator	Impact/ effect	Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-poor knowledge on species and species behaviour.- limited knowledge on plant morphosis.- improper practice in control of alien species	<p>Villagers</p> <p>Depletion of grazing land</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Depletion of grazing land-Suppression of indigenous Species-Bush encroachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Control spread of the species-Training on proper forestry management- Minimize use of invasive species as fence

f) **Illegal Mining**

Minerals found in Umgusa District include but are not limited to clay , gold, gravel, lime and sand. However, 90% of these minerals are being extracted illegally through gold panning and illegal mining. The extraction process is not done sustainably hence creating environmental degradation resulting in dig deep pits which are never rehabilitated or reclaimed. Ripple effects include water pollution and siltation of rivers. These effects tend to threaten human and wildlife health as hazardous chemicals are washed to water sourcing through surface runoff and overland flow thereby contaminating soils which could potentially be used in irrigation and agriculture. Illegal activities are rampant in Hope fountain, heany Junction, Ntabazinduna, Mbizo, Pampen Pout, Mfazimithi and a bit of Nyamandlovu areas. See Map attached.

Map showing distribution of illegal mines in Umuza District.

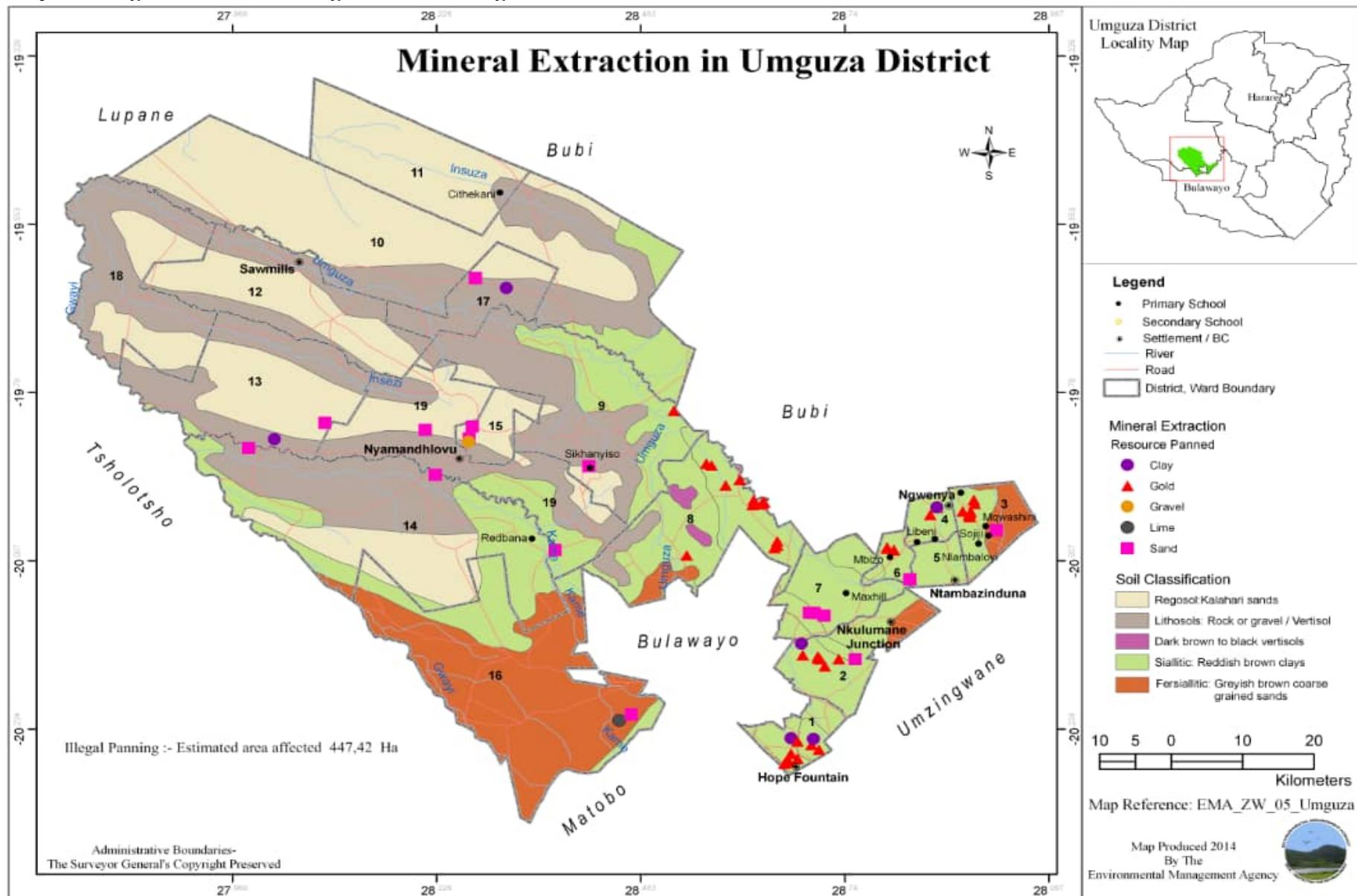
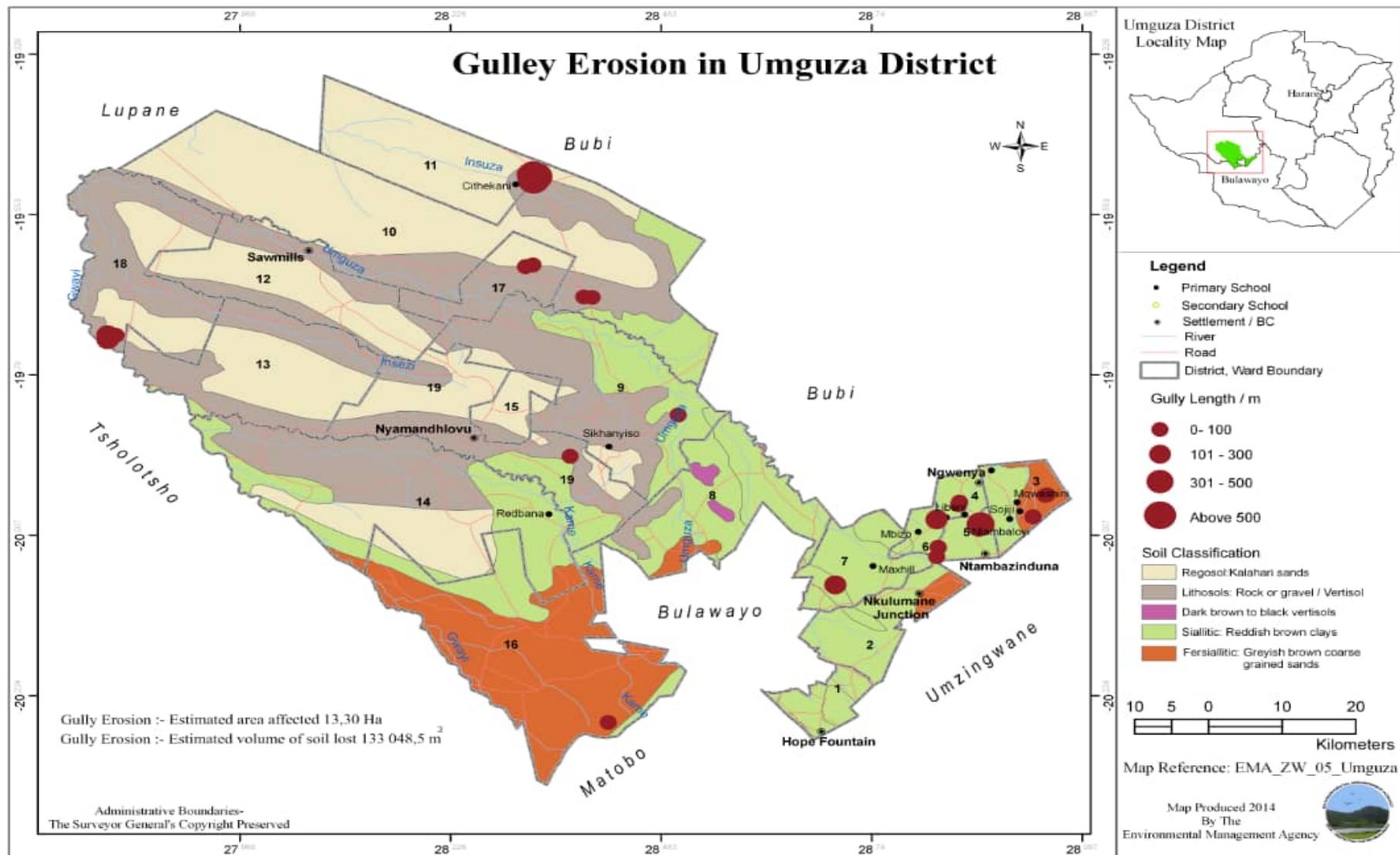


Table 11: Illegal Mining

Cause	Culprit	Impact /effect	Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Unemployment-Economic hardships-High cost on registration of mines-Lack of knowledge in terms of legalizing operations	Locals Illegal miners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Increase veld fires-Leaves open pits-Deforestation-Soil erosion-Pollution-Death/injuries-Diseases-Land degradationpopulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Capacity building-Law enforcement-Employment creation-Flexibility in acquiring prospecting license and registration-Skills development-Withdrawal of EPOs

g) Soil Erosion

In Umgusa the most pronounced prevalent type of erosion is gully erosion. Increases gully formation, siltation and soil infertility leading to land degradation and poverty. Prolonged erosion leads to gully formation, which is an environmental threat on its own.



Gully Erosion Map: Umgusa District.

Table 12: Soil Erosion

Cause	Culprits	Impact/effect	Solution
-Overgrazing	-Farmers	-Loss of pastures	-Awareness meeting
-Overstocking	-Miners	-Formation of gullies	-Tree Planting
-Heavy rains	-Poachers	-Unfertile soils	-Contour ridges construction siltation
-Deforestation			
-Veld fires			
- sand extraction			

h) Deforestation

Common throughout the whole district in communal indigenous forests as people use firewood. Deforestation results in ecological imbalance of the species composition in an ecosystem. Deforestation can be controlled by having a proper pattern of harvesting wood in each community

Table 13: Deforestation

Cause	Culprit	Impact/effect	Solution
-Harvesting of Mopani Worms and fruit trees umchekisane, ubhunzu (Grewia flauvescence and Grewia monticolla	-Famers	-Soil erosion	-Implementation of the bylaws
-Brick moulding	-Brick moulders	-Extinction of tree species	-Establishing woodlots for brick mouldering
-Veld fires	-Mopani worm harvesters	-Exacerbates natural disasters by removing protection(trees)	-Afforestation
-Traditional medicine Practitioners		-Destruction of forest and vegetation Cover	-Practice sustainability
-Wood carving			
-Mining			
-Clearing for cultivation			
-Commercializing firewood			

i) **Wildlife Poaching**

Poaching is not too widespread, it is mostly common on plains game for subsistence purposes. This is because there has been a lot of settlements in wildlife corridors thereby resulting in reduction of wildlife habitats. Continued resettlement of people along the landscape has led to the decline in animal populations due to habitat fragmentation.

Table 14: Wildlife Poaching

Causes	Culprit	Impacts	Solution
-Unemployment -Land resettlement -Ignorance pertaining law	Community members	-Migration of wildlife -Extinction of species -Land degradation requirements	-Stiffening of laws -Awareness campaigns -Deployment of rangers to assist resource monitors -Enforcement of bylaws by the local authority and land use plan

j) **Gullies**

Mostly affects the Northern and the Western parts of the district. Gully erosion increases the impacts of other forms of erosion by altering the slope of any given area. This leads to rapid washing down of soil and ultimately siltation of water bodies. The problem of gully erosion are not reversible that is natural hydrological processes are less likely to reclaim the gully without human intervention. If not controlled gullies may result in the permanent siltation of water bodies in any given locality.

Table 15: Gullies

Cause	Culprit	Impacts/ effects	Solution
-Pulling of sleighs, livestock and vehicle trails -Overstocking and Overgrazing	-Farmers -Miners	-Increases soil erosion and and vehicle trails contributes to the development of gullies.	-Gully reclamation at village level and - stopping the use of sleighs -Promoting public awareness controlling overgrazing, paddocking and destocking

SECTION THREE

3.0 Introduction

This section serves to outline the proposed action plans for four major environmental issues that include pollution, veld fires, gold panning/illegal mining and deforestation. The possible solutions which were discovered in assessment of environmental issues were considered and used for preparing an action plan for each solution. These are outlined in the following tables:

Table 16 Action Plan: Mining

Mining and Quarrying							
Goal: To promote a sustainable mining							
Objective: To promote environmental friendly mining industry.							
Strategy:							
1. Strengthen the application of environmental friendly mining principles 2. Strengthen law enforcement including establishment of deterrent fines.							
Priority Issues	Priority Action	Target	Indicator	Lead Institution	Partner institutions	Time(Short, medium ,long-term, ongoing)	Potential sources for resources
Unsafe use of Hazardous substances	Review and Harmonize policies, acts And Regulations	20%	Number of reviewed, policies and by laws.	URDC	EMA, ZRP	Medium	GVT, PS
Abandoned Degraded mined sites	Inventory of Degraded mined areas.	100%	Inventories maps and databases.	EMA	Min of Mines, URDC	Short	EMA, DVP, PS

Water, air and land pollution	Law Enforcement	60%	Rate of compliance	EMA	URDC Min Health	ongoing	GVT, DVP
Ecosystem destruction	Rehabilitation of degraded mining sites	10%	Mined Area rehabilitated	EMA	URDC, private sector	ongoing	EMA, GVT, Min Mines
-Land use Conflicts	Capacity building on Sustainable mining and Cleaner Technologies	20%	Number of Capacity Building Programs on sustainable mining and cleaner technologies	URDC	Min Mines,EMA private players	ongoing	DVP, PS

Table 17 Action Plan: Forestry

Forestry							
Goal: To ensure the sustainable management of forest resources.							
Objective: To promote sustainable forest management for improved livelihood and biodiversity.							
Strategy :							
Priority Issues	Priority Action	Target	Indicator	Lead Institution	Partner institutions	Time(Short, medium ,long-term, ongoing)	Potential sources for resources
Afforestation And reforestation	Public Education Afforestation Law enforcement	10%	Tickets issued to timber and firewood poachers Number of trees planted	URDC FC	EMA, Min. Women Affairs	Long term	GVT, DVP
Alternative Energy Sources	Public Education	5%	Level of adoption of alternative energy sources	FC	URDC, EMA	Long term	PS,GVT
Veld fire management	Fire management plan put into Action	25%	Reduced occurrence of forest fires Reduced area burnt (ha)	FC	AGRITEX, EMA, URDC	Short term	EMA. GVT, PS,DVP

Endangered Species	Protection of Endangered Species Plant more Endangered Species	10%	Number of endangered plant species protected	FC	URDC,EMA	Long term	FC,GVT,PS,DVP
Harvesting of forestry Products	Regulate harvesting of Forestry Products	10%	Number of bylaws put in place	URDC	URDC, FC,EMA	Medium	URDC,GVT
Invasive Species management	Removal of all invasive Species	4ha	Size of area cleared	URDC	FC,EMA, AGRITEX	Medium term	GVT,EMA, FC,URDC
Grazing management	Managing Stocking Capacities	10%	Number of tickets issued Establishment of paddocks	URDC	VET, AGRITEX	Long term	GVT,PS
Promote beneficiation From Projects	Establish Community projects on hay bailing, bee keeping	60%	Number of projects established	URDC	FC,EMA,AGRITTEX,VET	Long term	GVT,PS

Table 18 Action Plan: Wildlife

Biodiversity-Wildlife							
Goal: To conserve wildlife and ensure communities benefit from protecting wildlife within their localities.							
Objective: To sustainably manage wildlife biodiversity through incentivizing local communities and capacitating responsible agencies.							
Strategy :							
Priority Issues	Priority Action	Target	Indicator	Lead Institution	Partner institutions	Time(Short, medium ,longterm)	Potential sources for Resources
Human wildlife Conflicts	Review and implement the CAMPFIRE program.	15%	Rate of adoption of Campfire Program by communities	URDC,	Zimparks	Long term	PS, local government

Habitat loss due to land use Change	Strengthen and intensify Wildlife protection and Conservation Programs	20%	Number of programs implemented	URDC	Zimparks, private players	Short-mid term	Zimparks, PS
Poaching	Enforce Wildlife Protection Legislations	60%	Rate of Compliance	URDC	URDC, Zimparks ZRP	Short term	GVT

Table 19 Action Plan: Water Sources and water products

Water Sources							
Goal: To have adequate and reliable clean and safe water sources capable of sustaining the required needs.							
Objective: To protect and make available clean and safe water sources capable of sustaining the required needs.							
Strategy :							
Priority Issues	Priority Action	Target	Indicator	Lead Institution	Partner institutions	Time(Short, medium ,longterm)	Potential sources for resources
- Water Quality and Quantity	Strengthen integrated and sustainable water resource management Plans	10%	Water Resource management Plans strengthened	EMA	EMA, ZINWA, catchment councils	Short – mid term	Central Government, development partners, private players
-Wetland degradation	Strengthen Enforcement of legislation related to	10%	Compliance to water	ZINWA EMA	ZINWA, Sub-catchment Councils, URDC, EMA,	Short term	EMA,

	water resource management Rehabilitation and protection of wetlands		resource management Area of wetlands rehabilitated and protected		traditional leaders,		
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Table 20 Action Plan: Sand abstraction

Sand abstraction							
Goal: To promote sustainable abstraction of sand.							
Objective: To avail abstraction sites							
Strategy :							
Priority Issues	Priority Action	Target	Indicator	Lead Institution	Partner institutions	Time(Short, medium ,longterm)	Potential sources for resources
-To regulate abstraction of sand	Establish abstraction Sites	90%	Number Registered Abstraction Sites	URDC	EMA,	Short – mid term	URDC
- To monitor sand abstraction	Establish environment committees at ward level Law enforcement on offenders	100%	Number of Monitoring teams set up Tickets Issued	URDC	EMA	Short term	URDC

CONCLUSION

The LEAP document is an environmental blueprint for the management of natural resources in Umgusa District. It encourages sustainable management of resources by the community through participation and enables the community to be identified with the projects and have a sense of ownership over them. Prioritization of environmental issues in the district will reduce expenditure incurred through environmental destruction rehabilitation and protection. It is always cheaper to protect, prevent than to remedy.